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The Sun also rises on the school of nursing, pp.6

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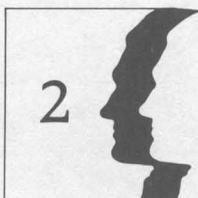
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THE SUN ALSO RISES ON THE SCHOOL OF NURSING

1891-1899

THE LAST DECADE of the 19th Century, known as the Gay Nineties, was one of excitement, change, and brimming optimism. Frontiers of hope and opportunity attracted a flood of immigrants from abroad. New industries mushroomed throughout the land. Fortunes were made in railroads, shipping, finance, and other fields. Yet, there was fun, too, a bit naughty but nice—no hippies, freaks or drug scenes. It was a time of picnics in the park, bicycles built for two, vaudeville shows, and ice-cream parlors. Strolling gentlemen tipped their hats in passing to ladies whose skirts rose scandalously above well-formed ankles.

Philadelphia, which had produced America's first schools of medicine, pharmacy, and law, was bursting at the seams as its streets, homes, and taverns proliferated. The autumn leaves were swirling along the city's avenues when the Jefferson Medical College Hospital Training School for Nurses opened its doors in 1891. On a blustery fall day, 13 prim and proper young ladies reported to Chief Nurse Ella Benson to begin the great adventure of their lives.

Requirements for admission to the then two-year course of the School were quite rigid. Applicants had to be between 21 and 35 years of age; those in the 25-30 bracket were favored, all other qualifications being equal. Women of "superior education, culture, and refinement" were also granted preferential status. Certificates of good health and testimonials of high moral



In the Crimean War (1853-1856), Florence Nightingale was superintendent of nurses in Turkey. The training school for nurses that she established in England in 1860 became a model for early nursing schools in the States.



Two of the early directors of the School of Nursing were: Katherine ("Effie") Darling (left), 1893-1894; and Susan C. Hearle, 1894-1908.

character were absolute prerequisites. Final acceptance into the School was conditioned upon successful completion of a 30-day period of probation, which could be extended to two months in borderline cases at the School's discretion.

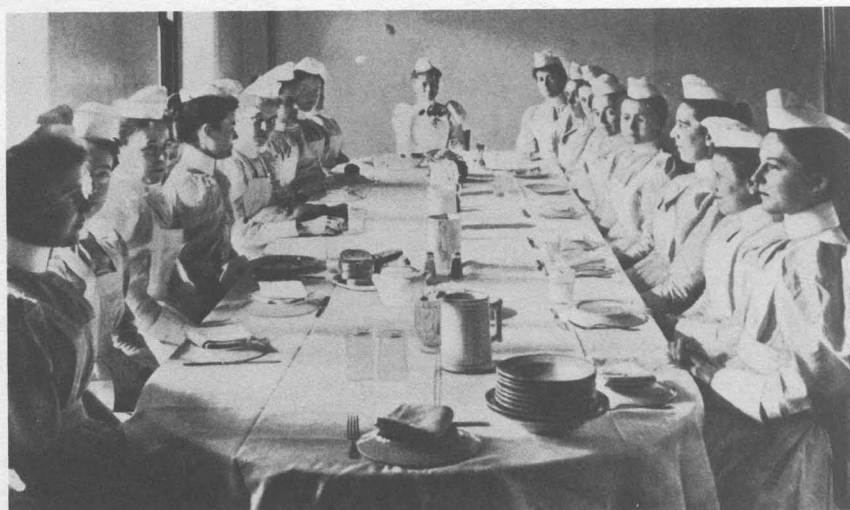
Each prospective student was advised to pack in her suitcase for the first month of probation (no uniform was worn during this trial period) a wardrobe consisting of two or three calico or chintz dresses, two dark skirts, four large white aprons, and necessary unmentionables. All of the foregoing were to be plainly made with no ruffles, tucks, puffs, embroidery, lace or trimming. Broad-toed, flat-heeled, noiseless shoes were the prescribed footwear. Four table napkins with ring, two laundry bags, a pin ball, and a pair of scissors were suggested accessories. Cosmetics, hair curlers, and other artifices of "loose women" were strictly out.

After a welcome cup of tea (without sympathy) and a talk by the rather austere Miss Benson on rules of conduct, the first band of "probies" were glad to retire to their somewhat cramped quarters on an upper floor of the hospital. It had been a long and tiring day of travel, meeting their classmates, and getting settled. After donning their long flannel nightgowns (not a "peek-a-boo" or a "baby doll" in the bunch), they tumbled into their cots.

But whatever dreams the girls had of becoming heroic "Nightingales" in their own right were rudely shattered by reveille at dawn. Since classes started at the frightful hour of 7 a.m., they scrambled to wash, dress, and down a hasty breakfast. This was the start of a 14-hour day that included lectures, tours of duty in the hospital, and occasional visits to homes of the sick. Some of these recruits may well have wondered whether they had enlisted in the French Foreign Legion instead of a training school for nurses.

The curriculum in those early days covered general, medical, surgical, gynecological, and obstetrical nursing, plus dietetics. The diet kitchen of the hospital, where nurses could prepare special diets for patients, was opened in October, 1897. Miss Ann Bailey, one of the first instructors to be engaged by the School, taught "The Theory and Practice of Cooking."

Students were given the opportunity to gain experience in private home nursing under the general supervision of the attending physician during the second year of training. If the nurse



Pictured here is the third dinner relay for student nurses and their supervisors at Jefferson Medical College Hospital in 1898. Silence was maintained until the blessing had been asked.



The proud members of the graduating class of 1893-1894 pose for posterity in their primly starched white uniforms and caps.

proved to be satisfactory, she was retained; if not, she was sent back to the hospital. Fees for her services, which ranged from \$10 to \$15 a week, reverted to the hospital. However, her traveling and laundry expenses were the responsibility of the employer, who was expected to file a confidential report on her conduct and efficiency. No nurse was permitted to stay more than eight weeks at one place.

During the probationary period, the pupil was tested on her ability to read aloud well, to write physicians' orders legibly and accurately, to keep simple accounts and reports of cases, and to take notes of lectures. If she passed these tests and demonstrated a real aptitude for a career in professional nursing, she was formally accepted into the School. Two rewards were bestowed on those who emerged from "probie" to full-fledged student status.

First, the nurse candidate was granted the privilege of wearing the official Jefferson uniform of the day. It was floor-length of solid pink cotton material with buttons down the front and a high Bishop's collar buttoning in the back. The balloon sleeves fastened tightly at the wrist and had cuffs that reached halfway to the elbow. The bib and apron were combined and composed of lawn material. Caps were made of lawn material with a wide band turned back and a ruffle on the edge. This basic winter uniform was replaced by one of slightly cooler fabric in the summer with a lawn kerchief placed around the neck instead of a collar. Other than reducing the sleeves to a tailor cut and extending the bib of the apron, this uniform style remained almost the same until 1915.

The second reward granted the successful nurse candidate was an allowance of \$6.00 per month for the first year and \$8.00 per month for the second year. (Note: When the School went to a three-year curriculum in 1893, the amounts were \$6.00, \$7.00, and \$8.00, respectively.) This stipend was not to be considered as compensation for services, but rather was intended to cover such necessary expenses as uniforms, books, stationery, etc. After all, the student did receive board, lodging, and laundry work free of charge in addition to her education. Other fringe benefits included two weeks of vacation a year and hospital care in the event of illness.

If the bright-eyed students in their spiffy new uniforms expected to be welcomed with open arms by the older staff nurses in the

hospital, they were sadly disillusioned. Some of the seniors rode the hapless neophytes mercilessly, assigning them to the dirtiest details, and scoffing when delicate young tummies recoiled at the sight of blood and suppurating infections. Even some of the doctors resented the intrusion of the fresh-faced newcomers in wards where operations were openly performed in full view of other patients. But by sheer grit and a willingness to learn, the students gradually proved their mettle and won tacit, if not whole-hearted, acceptance. As an interesting footnote, the daily rates charged by the hospital in those days were \$2.00 without massage and \$3.00 with, plus laundry costs. Contrast these figures with the average hospital cost per day in 1980 of \$245.00 (Source: American Hospital Association report, October, 1981).

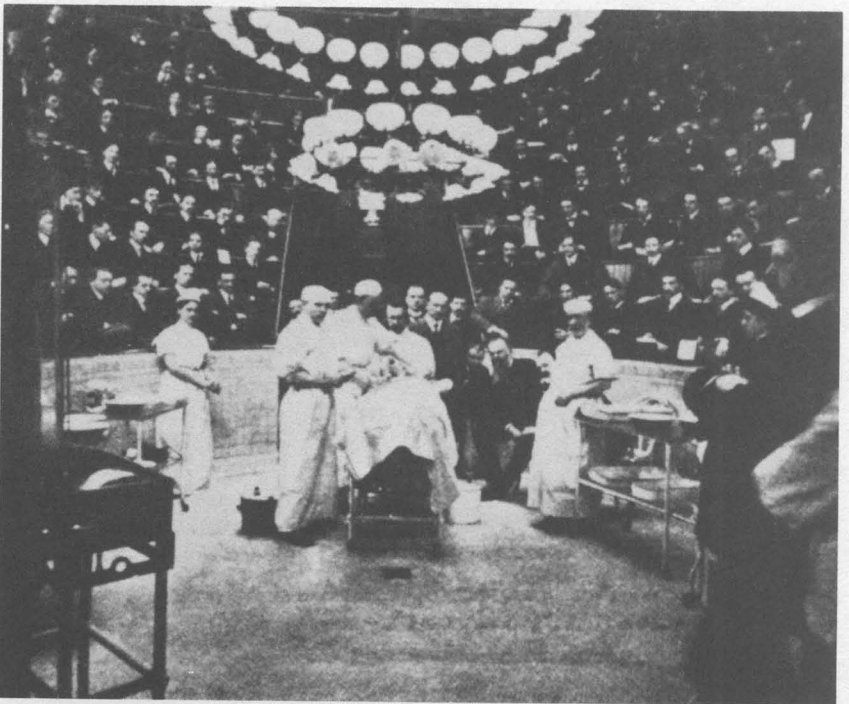
After several months in office, Miss Benson resigned as head of the School. She was succeeded by Miss Katherine ("Effie") Darling, a youthful maiden lady of blithe spirit. Within the confines of contemporary customs, she sought to infuse a bit of gaiety into the highly restricted social lives of her charges. Well-chaperoned outings to local cultural events were conducted. Carefully screened gentlemen callers were permitted to pay court one evening a week in the residence parlor under the watchful eye of a hovering housemother, lest any furtive kisses be stolen.

During Miss Darling's tenure, the first graduation exercises were held on November 23, 1893. Diplomas were awarded to five proud students out of the original 13 who had survived the rigorous two-year training course. Shortly thereafter, it was extended to three years. Since these five graduates headed a parade of over 5,000 Jeff nurses in the ensuing years, a special note of posthumous recognition is due Mary Armstrong, Carrie Bear, Sara B. Bower, Georgianna Howell, and Sara E. Martin.

By exercising her radiant smile and perhaps a bit of innocent guile, the vibrant "Effie" was able to persuade the Board of Trustees of the hospital to rent quarters at 518 Spruce Street as the first official Nurses' Home. Her young charges moved there on May 22, 1893. While hardly lavish by today's standards, it was a welcome refuge from their hospital warren. Soon thereafter, since the School's enrollment was starting to spiral, negotiations were launched for more commodious accommodations at 226 South Seventh Street. However, the actual transfer there was not made

until the spring of 1895. This second site was adjacent to the Maternity Section of the hospital. Thus, students were able to get "next door" instruction in obstetrical nursing.

In the fall of 1894, Miss Darling accepted an offer she couldn't refuse from a Colorado hospital. She was succeeded by Miss Susan C. Hearle, an English woman and a graduate of the Philadelphia General Hospital nursing school. She had received her early training in Great Britain under the revered Florence Nightingale, the so-called "Mother of Modern Nursing." Miss Hearle was a lady of considerable dignity and refinement who spoke in a rather dry Anglican manner. But behind her pince-nez, her brown eyes twinkled with warmth, kindness, and a good sense of humor. She was popular not only with the students, but with the faculty as well.



In the early days, little attention was paid to surgical cleanliness. The principal duty of a nurse during a surgical operation was to "fetch" for the doctors and clean up.

When Miss Hearle assumed office, there were about 30 student nurses in the School, a figure which climbed steadily during her 14 years as director. For example, the Annual Report of the School for 1895 indicates that 110 applications were received, 44 applicants were admitted, and active enrollment was 35 students, plus four probationers. During that year, 62 classes were held, and over 70 lectures were given on such subjects as anatomy and physiology; surgical, medical, obstetrical, and gynecological nursing; nursing diseases of children; nursing diseases of the eye and ear; and bandaging, therapeutics, and massage.

Miss Hearle was also instrumental in the founding of the Jefferson Nurses' Alumnae Association in 1895 and was its first president. Over the years the organization has expanded and broadened its scope to include a reunion luncheon each May, an annual bulletin, sick benefits, scholarships, and awards. (Please refer to Appendices for further details.)

In August, 1898, during the Spanish-American War, Jefferson nurses initiated an enduring tradition of ready response to emergency calls. Due to epidemics of typhoid fever and poorly trained nursing personnel, the mortality rate among American troops in Army camps was soaring. The City of Philadelphia dispatched a service train to Camp Fernandina, Florida with two Jefferson nurses aboard to pick up and return for treatment 50 seriously ill soldiers, one of whom died in transit. Similarly, a group of Jefferson nurses rendered aid and assistance to the sick and injured during the devastating Galveston, Texas flood of 1900.

As the decade drew to a close, the Jefferson Medical College Hospital Training School for Nurses had been firmly established. The number of pupils had increased, the curriculum had been expanded and refined, the facilities had been improved, and a closer rapport had developed between the faculty, nursing service personnel and the students. Although nominally still an integral part of the hospital and responsible to its Board of Trustees, the School had begun to assume a real identity of its own.